

Be Still and Know – Osho

What exactly do you mean by saying “Be still and know” and also “seek the strength of no-desire”?

Be still and know is one of the most fundamental sutras of the inner alchemy. But by being still is not meant that you have to force stillness upon yourself. A forced stillness is not true stillness. One can sit like a Buddha, almost like a statue, absolutely still, and yet deep down there may be great turmoil, a thousand and one thoughts rushing. There may be great traffic in the mind. The body can be forced to sit silently for hours, and you can also learn tricks to still the mind.

For example, if you chant any mantra for hours, any name of God, if you simply go on chanting “Allah, Allah, Allah,” it functions like a tranquilizer. Repetition of a single word or a single mantra creates a certain melody in your mind soothing, very soothing, very calming. And a kind of stillness will be felt which is not the true kind—because the sound of a certain mantra is simply changing the chemistry of your mind. The change is not alchemical, it is chemical.

Sound is chemistry. Hence music can help you to become still. And, moreover, when a certain word or a mantra is repeated constantly, you become hypnotized by it. That’s the secret of all hypnosis. You look at a flame, a candle flame, constantly—what are you doing? You are repeating the flame through the eyes, again and again and again. It is a repetition; it is a mantra—through the eyes. Or you can repeat a mantra inside yourself; that is through the ear, through the sound. Any sense can be used. Perfume, incense can be used; the same incense can hypnotize you.

Hypnosis means going into deep sleep, artificial sleep. That’s exactly the meaning of the word ‘hypnosis’: a sleep deliberately created. It can be through a tranquilizer, it can be through a soothing silence, sound, music, perfume, incense—there can be a thousand and one ways, but you will become hypnotized. And, hypnotized, you will feel a kind of stillness which is not true.

And also, if you repeat a certain mantra again and again, you will feel bored. Boredom also brings sleep. That’s why doctors suggest to people who cannot sleep that they count sheep from one to a hundred, and then backwards from a hundred—ninety-nine, ninety-eight, back to one—and then go up the ladder again... go on coming up and down. How long can you do it? Somewhere after going three or four times up and down the ladder you will fall asleep. It is the most ancient formula for falling asleep: count sheep from one to a hundred and then come back—because it is such a boring job that you lose all interest in it. And the moment you lose all interest in it, there is nowhere to escape except in sleep.

Mothers know it perfectly well. Hence the lullaby: the mother goes on repeating a single note again and again and the child falls asleep. And children have their own mantras: they can suck on their thumbs—that is a mantra. The child goes on sucking on the thumb; it is very consoling, soothing. He believes that it is the breast of the mother, and he falls asleep. Children invent their own methods—the teddy bear, or just the corner of the blanket, and the child holds it; if you take the blanket away from him he cannot sleep.

Even grownups are not really grownups; they have their own ritual of going into sleep.

For example, if every day you clean your teeth before going to sleep, try it one day without cleaning the teeth and you will be surprised: you cannot fall asleep. Something is missing. You have created a mantra. You change the dress, a different dress than you use in the daytime...you go into a subtle ritual.

A few people who are religious, so-called religious, they will do some prayer. That too is a ritual. Grownups are not really grownups; they have grown in age, but not psychologically, not spiritually. The world is full of children of many ages: one year, two years, up to seventy, eighty, ninety—all children.

I am not talking about their stillness. When I say “Be still and know” I mean a stillness that comes out of understanding, not out of any kind of hypnosis. And out of understanding the first thing that happens is: “Seek the strength of no-desire.” The more you look into your life; you will find your life is in a mess because of desiring. Why are you in such a storm continuously? It is because of the desire — not only one desire but a thousand and one desires. And no desire can ever be fulfilled; no desire has ever been fulfilled. Desire as such is incapable of being fulfilled, intrinsically it is unfulfillable. Hence each desire creates turmoil, expectation, hope, then frustration, hopelessness. And you have a thousand and one desires surrounding you, and you go on supporting your own enemies.

When you look in, when you watch, you become aware that desire is the cause of your whole misery. Seeing it, desiring disappears—JUST BY SEEING IT, desiring disappears. Seeing that desire never leads anywhere, but that you go on moving in circles and desire goes on goading you in the same repetitive patterns, seeing this—not because I am saying it, but seeing it on your own—desire disappears. And the disappearance of desire is the stillness, the real stillness, I am talking about.

It brings two things to you: great strength, because all the energy that was involved in a thousand and one desires is released. Now energy no more leaks from you; you don't have any holes for it to leak from. You become a reservoir of great energy. And the second thing: because now there is no noise of desires clashing, conflicting with each other, there is no civil war going on... what to do? To be or not to be? To do this or to do that? When there is no conflict, no desire, when all the storm is gone, the silence that follows the storm, that is the stillness I am talking about.

Be still and know.

And I am not saying that by being still you will be ready to know—no. Just by being still you will know. Being still and knowing are the same phenomenon, because when you are still like a mirror, a still lake, no ripples, then the whole firmament, the whole sky, is reflected in the lake. The stars come down, and the moon, and the clouds—all are reflected in tremendous beauty in the lake. When your consciousness becomes a still mirror, a still lake, a silent reservoir of energy, God is reflected in it.

You will not attain to knowledge, remember. You will become wise, you will become a

Buddha. You will not become a great scholar, a great pundit, a great theologian or a philosopher. You will be a Buddha. You will have an innocent kind of knowing: you will know how to live, you will know how to die, you will know how to love—you will know the real art of life. And the real art of life consists only of three things: how to live, how to love, how to die. And these things you will not know from scriptures; these things you will know from your innermost core.

I call this education. “Be still and know, seek the strength of no-desire.” It is desire that is making you weak; it is no-desire that will make you strong. It is desire that is creating continuous storms in you, it is no-desire that will bring stillness—and a stillness that comes on its own is authentic; it is not a kind of hypnosis. It is not through mantra, it is not through any device, it is not through any trick. You are not trying to pretend to be still: you are simply still. This will give you a new birth, you will be reborn. Jesus says: “Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into my kingdom of God.” I say the same to you—but the rebirth is a state of no-desire, a state of no-mind, a state of total stillness.

-Osho

From **Be Still and Know**, Chapter 10